

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF
THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia) laid before the House the following communication from the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC., June 29, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a grand jury subpoena for documents issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

JAMES M. EAGEN, III,
Chief Administrative Officer.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

A TRIBUTE TO PHILIP MERRILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to my good friend, the late Philip Merrill, who passed away earlier this month. And I rise as well to celebrate the life of a colorful and accomplished man and to say to his grieving family, his wife Eleanor, known to all of us as Ellie, his son Doug, his daughters Cathy and Nancy, his sister Suzanne and his four grandchildren, and to his other loved ones as well as his countless friends, that he will never be forgotten by Marylanders and by all those whose lives he touched.

He was a man of immense and innumerable talents. Phil worked literally all over the world. He served as counselor to the Under Secretary of Defense as a member of the Defense Policy Board at the Defense Department from 1983 to 1990, as Assistant Secretary General to NATO from 1990 to 1992, and most recently, as president and chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States from 2002 until last year.

In all, Phil served in six administrations. That impressive resume alone would be enough for most people to hang their hat on. Yet for Phil Merrill it is only half of his story. It was in his beloved home State of Maryland, particularly in southern Maryland, where he left his greatest mark and improved and enriched the lives of all of us who live in the region. Indeed, he was a presence in the Washington metropolitan area and in Washington itself.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that you are familiar with the Washingtonian magazine, a publication owned by the Merrills. The Washingtonian was only a part of his vast publication business. Yet, I think that in this magazine we can truly see an imprint of Phil's spirit and the way that he approached life.

Washington is a diverse city, a place where many, maybe even most, of those who live here come from other parts of the country. And because of that, the Washington area is extraordinarily diverse in background and experience and taste and opinion and in world views. Yet, those of us who spend so much time in this city, Mr. Speaker, usually end up too often becoming too consumed by the work that we are doing and the issues that we care about to fully appreciate and to truly enjoy the unique culture that exists here.

That is where the Washingtonian magazine steps in. It was designed to encourage people to step back for just a moment and to take in the immense natural beauty and cultural offerings of this historic city. That is just what Phil Merrill did for the people around him. He inspired others to see that there actually is time in a busy life to do things like enjoy the outdoors. In his case, it was sailing and skiing and spending time with his beloved family that he so dearly loved for so long.

The other facet of Phil's publishing business was Capitol Gazette Communications, comprised of five local papers and the Capitol, Annapolis' hometown paper. As the New York Times recently reported, Mr. Merrill bought the paper as a moribund afternoon daily in 1968 and built its circulation from 13,000 to 47,000. It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that the Capitol and the other newspapers in the Capitol Gazette Communications chain are a vital part of the daily lives of many of us and of my own constituents. They help unite our community.

□ 1945

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say that Phil Merrill, publisher, successful businessman, diplomat, also will long be remembered as one of the most generous philanthropists of the Washington metropolitan area. During his life, Phil contributed tens of millions of dollars to his favorite causes, including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, designed to restore and keep clean his beloved Chesapeake Bay, and the University of Maryland, for whom we shared a great love and commitment. He committed many dollars to the College of Journalism, one of the best now in the Nation. In addition, he contributed generously to the Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

Mr. Speaker, Phil Merrill was a giant. I attended his memorial service, and there were clearly well over 1,000 people in attendance. He was a man who thrived on living each hour of each day to the fullest. His pioneering spirit, his dedication to this country, and,

above all, his unwavering love of family and loyalty to friends serve as a model for all of us to live by.

Phil Merrill will be missed, but he will not be forgotten.

STAFF SERGEANT BEN WILLIAMS,
TEXAS MARINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as we are approaching the 4th of July, it was 230 years ago, this signing of the Declaration of Independence.

But it wasn't until after the War of 1812 this holiday became more meaningful to Americans. It was after our young Nation had to whip the British a second time and yet again fight for our Nation's freedom. That is when Americans recognized why we should remain and remember our Nation, our struggle, and all we stand for.

On the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, the author of the document, was asked to speak at a celebration about it. He was lying on his deathbed, so he answered the call with this note:

May it, the Declaration of Independence, be to the world, what I believe it will be. The signal of arousing men to burst the chains and assume the blessings and security of self-government.

For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these basic rights, and an undiminished devotion to all of them.

Mr. Speaker, today I present to you a portrait of the devotion of a person to that Declaration of Independence. His name was Staff Sergeant Benjamin DeWayne Williams, United States Marine. I have here a photograph of him in his combat attire in Iraq. This was the way he looked shortly before he was killed. He was a true patriot.

He was from Orange, Texas, and on his third and last deployment. He was set to return home on August 15. He had plans to surprise his mother. But before that could happen, he was killed on June 20 fighting the enemy forces in Al Anbar, Iraq.

Ben Williams was 30 years of age. His friends said he loved being a Marine. He went to Little Cypress Mauriceville High School and played football, and as soon as he graduated from high school, he joined the United States Marine Corps.

He was a staff sergeant in the Marines and an infantry unit leader assigned to the First Battalion, First Marine Regiment, First Marine Division of the First Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, California. Ben's grandmother Carson Williams called him "Bubba" and said, "Bubba died doing what he loved to do, and that was being a soldier."

His sacrifice gives true meaning to the Vietnam era phrase "All gave some . . . Some gave all."

Mr. Speaker, President Ronald Reagan was correct when he said that "Men cry 'peace, peace,' but there can be no peace as long as there is some American somewhere dying for the rest of us."

Sergeant Williams was one of those Americans. He gave all, dying for the rest of us. It was his devotion that thrust him into battle with his eyes wide open. He knew that there was a chance he wouldn't come home. He told his sister that he was fighting for her so that she could enjoy freedom. His level of devotion meant giving himself after giving his all. His life is the cost of freedom, a freedom and an expense that he embraced proudly.

Every member of the military we remember here on the House floor is described in those remarks as someone who loved his country, a soldier to the bone who believed in what they were doing. And that is tracking terrorists and ripping those terrorists from their roots so people around the world would know the blessings of liberty and the security of self-government that Thomas Jefferson wrote about in the Declaration of Independence.

We call ourselves patriots, but few of us have the scars to prove it. Few have the courage to face and embrace the darkest unknown, the possibility of not going home.

These few, these volunteers, are a rich testament to the courage they have in their hearts. Now and always we must remember their sacrifice, our men and women who fight, so we can look in the blue skies of liberty and remember them with the flying of every star and every stripe.

So this 4th of July, we remember all of those who served, all of them that gave some and those that gave all.

So Semper Fi, Ben Williams. Semper Fi.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Republican leadership decided to pull the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization legislation from the floor. Debate on this historic civil rights statute had been scheduled for last Wednesday afternoon, and just hours before it was to start, the bill was withdrawn from consideration.

As a cosponsor of this important bill, I am deeply troubled by the majority leadership's willingness to allow extreme members of their party to hijack reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, a law that has protected minority voters from intimidation and discrimination for 40 years. It was an act unbecoming a party that calls itself the "Party of Lincoln."

The original Voting Rights Act reinforced the Constitution's 15th amendment guarantee that race cannot be a bar to any citizen's right to vote. Although the 15th amendment was ratified in 1870, it took nearly 100 years for Congress to give it teeth with the Voting Rights Act. Until then, the rights of millions of Americans to vote was nullified by poll taxes, literacy tests, voter intimidation, and outright violence. Only in 1965, with the passage of the Voting Rights Act, were African Americans finally able to exercise the right to vote. But the path to this legislation was by no means easy.

On March 7, 1965, what has become known as Bloody Sunday, 600 civil rights marchers peacefully protested for the right to vote. Upon reaching the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, the marchers were attacked by State and local police, who tear-gassed them and beat them with batons.

Three years ago, in commemoration of the struggle for civil rights, I joined a pilgrimage led by my colleague Congressman JOHN LEWIS through many of the sites that were part of the fight for true equality here in America. We visited the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and on the wall of my office is a picture of the delegation, black, white, Asian and Latino, standing together in celebration of the sacrifices of those who marched there.

Standing there then and reflecting on the experience now, it is impossible to miss the transcendent importance of the unfettered right to vote. It was powerful enough then to garner the hatred of a mob of segregationists, and it inspires us now to continue to fight for reauthorization of the legislation and the full protections of our sacred franchise. I welcome a debate over the continuing vitality of the Voting Rights Act, but I deplore the delay which the Republican leadership's decision to pull the bill has occasioned.

In the decades since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, racial discrimination is still far too prevalent a feature of elections across the Nation from California to Florida. It is very true that significant progress has been made in the past 41 years since the VRA was first passed, and minority voters have a much greater voice in the political process today because of the Voting Rights Act. Despite that, after every election, we still hear stories of voter discrimination and intimidation, and we are reminded that this legislation remains important today, and we cannot let the provisions of the VRA expire.

These expiring provisions, pre-clearance of election law changes for jurisdictions with a history of discrimination, Federal observers at polls, and language assistance for limited English speakers, are still needed to ensure minority voting rights. It is evident to those from my State of California just how critical, for example, language assistance is for those with limited English skills.

We do not make our elections easy on voters. In a State where 135 candidates ran for Governor 3 years ago, it should be no surprise that during the 2004 general election, the California voter guidebook was nearly 200 pages. This guide included information on candidates and ballot measures that helped voters prepare for the election. Even native English speakers struggled to digest the ballot arguments in preparation for voting. For citizens with limited English proficiency, the task was all the more daunting.

I believe all U.S. citizens should learn the English language. It is the key to upward mobility in our society and a powerful common bond. Yet new citizens still learning the English language have the right to vote. Thankfully, due to the VRA, our polling sites provide language assistance so that all citizens can meaningfully participate in the election process, including new citizens still struggling to master the English language.

The right to vote for every American citizen is the foundation of our democracy. Unfortunately, there are still barriers to overcome, and we as a Nation must not give up on the protections that give content to that right. I am proud to support the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and will continue to do my part to ensure that the VRA remains effective and enforced. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I call upon the leadership to take immediate action to bring this legislation to the floor for a vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PLAN FOR IRAQ

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.